

Shuter: Litigation holding up homestead rebate checks

LA PORTE COUNTY — In response to several inquiries, La Porte County Auditor Teresa Shuter explained in a press release Wednesday that delays in the mailing of homestead rebate checks, approved by state legislators for 2006 pay 2007 property taxes, is the result of pending litigation.

"As most of the people in our community are aware, there was a public hearing held by the Department of Local Government Finance on March 6 to hear discussion on the accuracy, uniformity and the equity of the assessment of real property in La Porte County for the 2006 payable in 2007 tax year," Shuter said in the press release. "On April 16 another meeting between the parties involved in the litigation was held in Indianapolis. We received notice of yet another public meeting to be held here in La Porte on Thursday. The upcoming meeting has now been cancelled. We have been awaiting a decision

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Teresa Shuter,
county auditor

from the DLGF for seven weeks now. Meanwhile, homestead rebate checks are being delayed.

"The rebate checks are an additional percentage of state-issued homestead credit which is calculated from your assessed value for the 06/07 tax year. The DLGF must reach a final decision on La Porte County's assessment data prior to the issuance of rebates or the county could be sending out nearly 30,000 rebate checks in error at a cost of nearly \$50,000 to the people in our community. The directive from the DLGF on October 29,

2007, clearly states, 'Refunds may not be calculated based on provisional property tax bills or bills based on property assessments that have been declared invalid and subject to reassessment.' That decision is precisely what La Porte County is waiting for."

"I feel it is important to also point out that the funds received from the state for the rebate checks have been invested and the interest earned will help offset the administrative expenses to implement this project."